



For Immediate Release  
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## **Snowmobile trails and tourism sign legislation moving forward in House**

**LANSING** – Tourism in northern Michigan is on track to get a big boost from legislation that was unanimously approved by House committees this week and will be voted on by the full House of Representatives next week, announced Sen. Jason Allen, R- Traverse City.

Senate Bills 735 and 1329, both sponsored by Allen, were passed out of the House of Representatives committees on Transportation and Natural Resources respectively.

SB 735 allows for the erecting of tourist-oriented directional signs within the jurisdiction of a local unit of government, if approved by the local governing body.

“Directional signs play a key role in assisting tourists to northern Michigan’s recreational opportunities,” Allen said. “Senate Bill 735 will greatly expand the ability of local governments to promote tourism in northern Michigan and bolster local economies.”

Allen sponsored the legislation after learning about difficulties the Mallard Golf Course owners Arnold and David Smith were facing in establishing a tourist-oriented directional sign for their business. According to David Smith, the one summer they had a directional sign their business increased.

Under the bill, operators of tourist-based businesses would be allowed to have signs erected if they are allowed by local ordinance. Once approved at the local level, businesses would still apply to the Michigan Department of Transportation for a permit to erect a tourism-related directional sign.

SB 1239 will allow snowmobiles to be operated within the right-of-way of a public limited access highway, if the right-of-way is designated as a snowmobile trail through a joint agreement by the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Department of Natural Resources. The two departments would be in charge of establishing the details of the trail to ensure that the appropriate safety issues are addressed.

“Winter tourism is an essential component of northern Michigan’s economy,” Allen said. “Allowing for snowmobile traffic along limited access highways solves the problem of getting from Gaylord to Cheboygan via snowmobile and provides greater access to all of northern Michigan for snowmobile enthusiasts.”

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